

Message Text

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ORIGIN HA-05

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P 202234Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMCONSUL FUKUOKA
AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
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AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 303127

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, MY

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN INTEREST IN INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 9051; (B) STATE 284894; (C)
CANBERRA 8795; (D) BANGKOK 34857

1. SUMMARY - IN A RECENT MEETING WITH HA AND EA OFFICERS IN DEPARTMENT, AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROSS COTTRILL CONFIRMED THAT DESPITE DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS GENERATED BY LANDING OF REFUGEE BOATS IN NORTHERN PARTS, AUSTRALIA WILL NOT TURN AWAY FUTURE BOATREFUGEE ARRIVALS. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS EXPLAINED TO COTTRILL ..AT CONTINUED AUSTRALIAN ACCEPTANCE OF BOAT REFUGEES FROM THE CAMPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IS BEST MEANS OF MINIMIZING NUMBER OF REFUGEE BOATS HEADING DIRECTLY FOR AUSTRALIA. DEPARTMENT PROMISED TO SHARE INFORMATION ON THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE SITUATION WITH GOA AND RE-CONFIRMED DEPARTMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO RUN VISA FALCON CHECKS ON ANY REFUGEE AT GOA REQUEST.

2.COTTRILLEXPLAINED AUSTRALIAN DOMESTIC APPREHENSIONS RAISED BY REFUGEE BOAT ARRIVALS BUT INDICATED GOVERNMENT WILL NOT REFUSE ENTRY TO REFUGEE BOATS. HOWEVER COTTRILL

EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IN INDONESIA AND PERHAPS OTHER COUNTRIES, REFUGEE BOATS WERE BEING DIRECTED TO AUSTRALIA
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BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. COTTRILL ASKED FOR DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT ON FUTURE FLOW OF REFUGEES; WE INDICATED THE UNCERTAINTY OF PROJECTING FUTURE NUMBERS OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES.

3. COTTRILL INQUIRED ABOUT LONG-TERM U.S. POLICY ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES AND WAS BRIEFED ON OUR INTENTIONS TO DEVELOP WITH CONGRESS EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE LONG-TERM POLICY. IT WAS POINTED OUT TO COTTRILL THAT INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN RE-SETTLING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WOULD BE VITAL IN THIS PROCESS TO DEMONSTRATE TO CONGRESS THAT THE US IS NOT ALONE IN COPING WITH THIS PROBLEM. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT BECAUSE OF REFUGEE BOAT LANDINGS IN AUSTRALIA THIS IS NOT IDEAL TIME TO ASK FOR GREATER ACCEPTANCE OF REFUGEES, AN AUSTRALIAN MONTHLY QUOTA FOR BOAT REFUGEES COULD ENABLE USG TO ADOPT A MORE GENEROUS LONG-TERM POLICY WHICH IN TURN WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF REDUCING NUMBER OF REFUGEE BOATS WHICH MIGHT CHOOSE TO FLEE TO AUSTRALIA. AN AUSTRALIAN QUOTA FOR BOAT REFUGEES ENACTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE THUS COULD SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE SUM TOTAL OF RESETTLEMENT OFFERS OVER LONG RUN

FOR INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEES. COTTRILL UNDERSTANDS THIS RATIONALE AND PROMISED TO EXPLAIN BENEFITS OF AN AUSTRALIAN BOAT ALLOCATION TO CANBERRA. EMBASSY CANBERRA SHOULD FOLLOW UP DEPARTMENT'S APPEAL WITH DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA IN CANBERRA. COTTRILL INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT CHIEF POINT OF CONTACT ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WILL BE THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

4. ADDRESSEES ARE ENCOURAGED TO KEEP AUSTRALIANS BRIEFED ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEE DEVELOPMENTS AND REPORTING CABLES TO THE DEPARTMENT ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEE MATTERS SHOULD, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, INDICATE THAT CONTENTS CAN BE SHARED WITH THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HERE.

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5. COTTRILL REQUESTED INFORMATION ABOUT THE USG SECURITY CHECKS ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS EXPLAINED VISA FALCON PROCEDURES AND INDICATED THAT U.S. POSTS UPON GOA REQUEST WOULD BE ABLE TO INITIATE VISA FALCON CHECK ON ANY INDOCHINESE REFUGEE AS INDICATED EARLIER IN REFTEL B.

6. FOR CANBERRA: REFTEL C ASKS ABOUT NUMBER OF BOAT REFUGEES ALREADY RESETTLED IN U.S. UNDER IPP 77. AS OF 20 DECEMBER NEARLY 3000 BOAT REFUGEES HAVE ARRIVED IN

U.S. OF THE 7,000 ACCEPTED; THE REMAINING 4,000 ARE EXPECTED TO REACH THE U.S. BY END FEBRUARY 1978. REFTEL D GIVES FIGURES ON INLAND CASES FROM THAILAND. VANCE

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